

# The Last Straw



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## Synopsis

Christmas from a camel's-eye-view. Everyone has heard the Christmas story before, but **THE LAST STRAW** is a unique and unforgettable new telling. Voices roll across the desert sands to Hoshmakaka, a curmudgeonly old camel, whispering that he has been chosen for the great responsibility of carrying gifts to the new baby king. With reluctance, Hoshmakaka accepts his task. Every day in the heat crossing the desert, his pack grows ever more burdensome as the crowds of people, anxious to welcome the new king, give him their gifts to carry. He is as strong as ten horses as he proudly tells the younger camels. But, oh, his gout! Oh, his sciatica! Nevertheless, Hoshmakaka plods on until he reaches Bethlehem. In the end he realizes the great honor of his task and never again is there a burden too heavy for him to carry. Vlasta van Kampen's gorgeous illustrations of the hot desert sands and the cool, star-filled night sky transport readers on the journey to Bethlehem to see the new baby king. The beautifully detailed illustrations of the loveable Hoshmakaka masterfully change as his pack of gifts grows impossibly huge. The endearing Hoshmakaka is also available as a plush toy to be a companion at storytime. Nine inches tall and adorned with his precious pack of gifts, Hoshmakaka will be a great reminder of the rewards of giving all year long!

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 51 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

## Customer Reviews

Kindergarten-Grade 3-Hoshmakaka, an old, foolish, and proud camel, is chosen to carry the wise men's gifts to the baby Jesus. Reluctantly, he agrees and boasts to the younger camels that he has the strength of 10 horses. As he embarks on his journey, people along the way ask him to take their gifts. Goaded by the younger camels, he keeps adding to his load. A small child asks him to carry one last gift, a piece of straw for the baby's bed, and Hoshmakaka is brought to his knees by the weight. Jesus reaches out and touches him and "From that time on there was no burden, great or small, that Hoshmakaka would not gladly carry." The story is adapted from Thury's original libretto, performed by the Toronto Children's Chorus. Strikingly rich, detailed watercolors enrich the text. While the humbling message may be too subtly conveyed for very young children, this low-keyed and gentle story can be enjoyed by a broad audience.-M.W. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A grumpy camel's boast comes back to haunt him in this engaging Christmas picture-book tale, adapted from a choral libretto. Despite gout, sciatica, and general surliness, old Hoshmakaka reluctantly agrees to carry the Wise Men's gifts to the baby king. But because he incautiously puffs himself up before the younger camels, he also ends up taking jugs of milk and wine, baskets of pastries, and other presents offered along the way. Vlasa van Kampen's bright, sharply detailed watercolors depict the shaggy protagonist plodding along in stately arrogance beneath a burden that grows to comically towering proportions. When a child asks him to carry a piece of straw, Hoshmakaka refuses. He relents, however, but he realizes that if he wants to finish his trek, he'd better not stop again. Entering the stable at last, the camel falls to his knees in exhaustion, whereupon a touch of the baby's hand dispels both the burden's weight and the camel's wounded pride. The text and illustrations work unusually well together to evoke the story's humorous undertone while preserving a grand sense of occasion. John Peters --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A lovely Christmas tale. I try to collect new ones to read to the little ones in the family, every Christmas. I liked this one because it's closer to Jesus without being too complicated for children. So it's nice for little ones without getting all caught up in Santa Claus and snowmen.

There's a similar book that we just love in our family called Humphrey's First Christmas. It is a little similar to this one but Humphrey's First Christmas gets me choked up with tears every.single.time. I found the camel character in this story was more negative and whiny. We will more than likely pass

this book along.

Hoshmakaka is a camel that appears selfish from the very beginning. After hearing voices in the wind, he is given a task to help the three "wise men" on their own journey to see Jesus. His foolishness/pride eventually makes his journey harder than it may have originally been while traveling to witness the birth of the baby Jesus. Now, he struggles to prove to himself, as well as his peers, that he's not all talk. While only a thirty-two page book, the illustrations and story are miraculous in every aspect. The notion of something being "the last straw that broke the camel's back" is taken both figuratively and literally in this story. I absolutely recommend this alternative nativity story to anyone willing to experience an unconventional perspective not usually portrayed around Christmastime. With a beautiful ending, the audience is sure to grasp the meaning of Christmas while learning a lifelong virtue readers are sure to see. Happy reading!

I love this book! We were looking for a book for our Christmas program to take our own pictures of the kids dressed up that went along with the book and then make a slideshow to run while someone reads the book. This book is soooooo awesome. It metaphors all the things that weigh us down in life, but then when we bring them to Jesus, He takes them for us. I love the book and I cannot wait for our Christmas program! I would totally recommend it!

This is a funny camel story. He complains when he is asked to go on the journey and then people hear where his masters are taking him. They bring gifts for the new born king. The camel complains but still takes the gifts anyway. In the end the camel comes to a realization when he meets the Christ child. Appropriate for little kids. My kids like it!

We checked this book out from our local library when our daughter was just three. It was an instant favorite for us all. It made us laugh and touched us to tears. Two years later, our daughter still asks her daddy to give her a "Hoshmakaka ride" - him, the broken down old camel & her "the last straw." When trying to check it out at the library again this Christmas, I couldn't find a copy -- all were checked out & with holds on them. So I knew I had to buy a copy of our own. I highly recommend you do the same. It's a classic!

The Last Straw arrived in perfect "mint condition" The book had not been opened before by the condition of the spine! This book is going to be used with my students in third grade. We have 14

sayings and phrases that are part of our Core Knowledge Curriculum, and this book will be used with: "The last straw!" It is a perfect companion for my language unit.! I not only highly recommend this book; I recommend using ! Thanks again!!!! Job well done!!!! :)

I am delighted to say that the book came ahead of time and well packaged. It will be a birthday surprise for a friend who turns 90 in two days. The Last Straw is a story about an old camel who is taking what he believes to be his last journey, and of all things, he's asked to carry this "large burden" to a king. The Last Straw changed his life...it was the Best Straw after all! A wonderful story for the young and the young at heart. ANd, I am hoping that my friend will accept the gift and cherish it for her lifetime.

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